

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05
ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /090 W
-----123836 120252Z /41

O R 120103Z JAN 78
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9038
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN 0094

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: FURTHER ACTIONS ON PROXIMITY TALKS

REF: (A) USUN 084 (B) LUSAKA 0072

1. CONTACT GROUP MET AM JANUARY 11 TO CONTINUE DISCUSSION OF
NEXT STEPS IN EFFORT TO ARRANGE PROPOSED PROXIMITY TALKS.
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BRITISH OPENED MEETING BY AGREEING TO JOIN FRG, CANADA, AND
FRANCE IN SUPPORT OF THE COMPROMISE PROPOSAL (DESCRIBED REF A)
THAT WESTERN FIVE NOW EXPLORE WITH SOUTH AFRICA AND SWAPO
POSSIBILITIES OF BEGINNING THE PROPOSED TALKS ON EITHER
JANUARY 23 OR FEBRUARY 6. GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE THEN NOTED
THAT HE HAD JUST TALKED WITH UN COMMISSIONER FOR NAMIBIA
AHTISAARI, AHTISAARI HAD INDICATED THAT FROM RECENT TALK

WITH SWAPO UN REPRESENTATIVE THEO-BEN GURIRAB HE HAD RECEIVE IMPRESSION THAT SWAPO MIGHT BE ABLE TO EXHIBIT SOME FLEXIBILITY REGARDING A STARTING DATE BETWEEN JANUARY 17 AND 30. (THIS SUGGESTION COINCIDED WITH REPORT FROM LUSAKA (REF B) TO SAME EFFECT.) WITH THESE FACTORS IN MIND, AND SEEING NO POSSIBILITY OF GETTING GROUP'S SUPPORT FOR EXPLORING ONLY THE DATE OF FEBRUARY 6, WE AGREED TO SUPPORT COMPROMISE. GROUP ALSO AGREED THAT, IN APPROACHING SWAPO AND SOUTH AFRICA, IT SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR THAT GROUP WAS ONLY EXPLORING DATES AND NOT REPEAT NOT PROPOSING THEM. IT WAS FURTHER AGREED THAT ANY APPROACH TO SOUTH AFRICA REGARDING DANGERS OF ANNOUNCING ELECTION DATE SHOULD BE POSTPONED UNTIL DATE OF PROXIMITY TALKS HAS BEEN DETERMINED.

2. WITH CONTACT GROUP APPROVAL, AMBASSADOR MCHENRY THEN CALLED AMBASSADOR BOWDLER IN PRETORIA TO ADVISE HIM OF GROUP'S DECISION AND TO REQUEST HIM TO ARRANGE WITH HIS COLLEAGUES FOR ABOVE APPROACH TO BOTHA TO BE MADE IMMEDIATELY. WITH CONTACT GROUP STILL IN ROOM, MCHENRY THEN CALLED ADRIAAN EKSTEEN, CHARGE OF SOUTH AFRICAN MISSION TO UN AND SWAPO UN REPRESENTATIVE GURIRAB. GURIRAB STATED THAT HE HAD JUST TALKED BY PHONE WITH SWAPO PRESIDENT SAM NUJOMA, WHO IS STILL HOSPITALIZED IN EAST BERLIN AND IS EXPECTED TO BE RELEASED JANUARY 12. GURIRAB STATED THAT NUJOMA HAD TOLD HIM THAT ANY TIME AFTER JANUARY 30 WOULD BE FINE FOR STARTING DATE OF TALKS. GURIRAB AGREED TO CHECK AGAIN WITH NUJOMA REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF THE 23RD

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BUT SAID THAT HE WAS SURE IT WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE. IN SUBSEQUENT CALL, GURIRAB CONFIRMED UNACCEPTABILITY OF JANUARY 23. FOR LUSAKA: IN LIGHT OF GURIRAB'S APPARENTLY READY ACCESS TO NUJOMA, CONTACT GROUP AGREED THAT APPROACH TO SWAPO IN LUSAKA IS NOT NECESSARY.

3. IN TALKING WITH EKSTEEN, MCHENRY ADVISED HIM OF APPROACH WHICH WOULD BE MADE TO SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND ASKED EKSTEEN HIS REACTION TO POSSIBILITY OF EITHER DATE. EKSTEEN REPLIED THAT JANUARY 23 IS DEFINITELY OUT AND THAT HE KNEW OF COMMITMENTS ON BOTHA'S PART FOR FEBRUARY 6 BUT WISHED TO CONFIRM THEM. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE ONLY POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE FOR BOTHA TO COME TO NEW YORK ON JANUARY 17 AND EXTEND HIS VISIT BY ONE DAY TO INCLUDE THE 23RD. COMMENT: THIS LATTER SUGGESTION ONLY UNDERLINES THE IMPORTANCE WHICH BOTHA ATTRIBUTES TO TRIP TO NEW YORK AND ITS MEDIA ASPECTS AND THE RELATIVE UNIMPORTANCE HE SUBSCRIBES TO THE TALKS ON NAMIBIA. END COMMENT.

4. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, EKSTEEN PHONED BACK AND STATED BOTHA'S VIEW THAT HE HAD WRITTEN INVITATION FROM THE FIVE TO TALKS IN NEW YORK STARTING ON THE 17TH AND THAT HE WISHED

TO KNOW IF THAT INVITATION WAS NOW BEING WITHDRAWN.
WITH CONTACT GROUP APPROVAL, MCHENRY SUBSEQUENTLY REPLIED
ALONG FOLLOWING LINES: "IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF WITH-
DRAWING THE INVITATION. WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO DO IS TO
EXPLORE WHETHER THERE ARE ALTERNATIVE DATES WHICH MIGHT BE
ACCEPTABLE FOR THE TALKS WHICH WE HAVE PROPOSED.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 USUN 0094

OUR PROPOSAL CLEARLY STATED OUR INTENTION TO HOLD SIMILAR
DISCUSSIONS AT THE SAME TIME WITH THE OTHER PRINCIPAL PARTIES
INVOLVED. JUST AS WE EXPLORED THE POSSIBILITY OF STARTING THE
TALKS ON JANUARY 30, WE ARE NOW EXPLORING THE DATES OF JANUARY
23 AND FEBRUARY 6." EKSTEEN SAID THAT, REGARDLESS OF OUR INTEN-
TION TO HOLD TALKS WITH THE PRINCIPAL PARTIES INVOLVED, BOTHA
WAS NOW ASKING WHETHER WE WERE PREPARED TO HOLD TALKS ON JANUARY

17 WITH THE PRINCIPLE PARTIES AVAILABLE. MCHENRY REPLIED THAT
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HE WAS NOT INSTRUCTED IN THAT REGARD.

5. CONTACT GROUP BEGAN DISCUSSING POSSIBLE RESPONSE TO BOTH'S QUESTION. BRITISH STATED FIRMLY THAT THEY ARE NOT PREPARED, WITHOUT DISCUSSING MATTER WITH LONDON, TO RULE OUT SEPARATE TALKS WITH BOTHA IN NEW YORK ON THE 17TH. WE STATED THAT US STRONGLY OPPOSED THE SUGGESTION OF SEPARATE TALKS ON GROUNDS THAT SUCH TALKS ARE INCONSISTENT WITH NOTION OF PROXIMITY TALKS. CANADIANS AND FRENCH BOTH STATED THAT, IF PROXIMITY TALKS BECOME IMPOSSIBLE TO ARRANGE, THEN GROUP MUST CONSIDER POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER ROUND OF SEPARATE MEETINGS. GROUP DID NOT PURSUE THIS CONVERSATION FURTHER BUT AGREED TO DISCUSS WITH CAPITALS THE FORMULATION OF A RESPONSE TO BOTH'S QUERY.

6. SINCE CONCLUSION OF CONTACT GROUP MEETING, WE HAVE LEARNED FROM EKSTEEN (AND IT HAS BEEN CONFIRMED BY AMBASSADOR BOWDLER IN PHONE CONVERSATION WITH MCHENRY) THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAS NOW SAID THAT IT COULD AGREE TO A STARTING DATE OF JANUARY 23. EKSTEEN FURTHER ADDED THAT SOUTH AFRICA WOULD NOT AGREE TO "ANY SUBSEQUENT DATE." AS USUN AND DEPARTMENT FEARED, WE ARE NOW IN A SITUATION WHERE SOUTH AFRICA HAS ACCEPTED JANUARY 23 AND SWAPO HAS ACCEPTED FEBRUARY 6. CONTACT GROUP WILL MEET LATE TODAY TO BEGIN DISCUSSING WESTERN FIVE RESPONSE TO THIS SITUATION.

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